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Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-07 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 IO-13 OMB-01 TRSE-00 SAJ-01 EB-07 /097 W
---------- 013953 /17
R 151226Z DEC 76
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0070
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
AMEMBASSY DACCA
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USLO PEKING
CINCPAC HQS HAWAII

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 18078

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR IN UR
SUBJECT: SOVIETS SMART AT INDIAN DOMESTIC SHIFT TO "RIGHT"

1. ALTHOUGH THERE HAD BEEN RUMORS THAT PODGORNY AND OR GROMYKO MIGHT VISIT INDIA IN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS, THE SOVIET EMBASSY TELLS US THAT THERE WILL IN FACT BE NO QTE POLITICAL LEVEL UNQTE VISITS FROM MOSCOW TO NEW DELHI IN THE COMING MONTHS. SOVIET POLCOUNSELOR TOLD EMBOFF DECEMBER 12 THAT HE HAD CONFIRMED THIS WITH VISITING DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF SOVIET FONMIN SOUTH ASIAN DESK, BOLDYREV, THE PREVIOUS DAY. ONLY MAJOR SOVIET VISITS BEING PLANNED WOULD POSSIBLY BE BY MINISTERS OR DEPUTY MINISTERS OF ECONOMIC MINISTRIES SUCH AS COAL, FERTILIZER, CHEMICALS, OR PETROLEUM. VISIT DURING FIRST HALF OF JANUARY BY RUSSIAN ORTHODOX PATRIARCH IS ALSO ON, REPORTEDLY AT INVITATION OF SYRIAN ORTHODOX CATHOLICOS IN COCHIN. (AS WITH EVERYTING IN INDIA, THE SYRIAN CHURCH HAS SPLIT IN TWO AND THE "DISSIDENT"
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CATHOLICOS WHO VISITED MOSCOW THIS YEAR-- IS THE INVITER.)

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WE ASSUME THIS MESSAGE IS ALSO BEING PASSED BY THE RUSSIANS
TO THE GOI, BUT OUR IMPRESSION HAS BEEN THAT THE INDIANS
STILL DO IN FACT EXPECT SOME "POLITICAL" VISIT BY THE
SPRING. EMBASSY MOSCOW MAY BE ABLE TO GET REACTION FROM
INDIAN EMBASSY OFFICIALS.

2. SOVIET POLCOUNSELOR ACKNOWLEDGED THAT RELATIONS BE-
TWEEN THE CONGRESS PARTY AND COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA (CPI)
ARE INCREASINGLY STRAINED, A FACT WHICH WOULD ADVERSELY
AFFECT CONGRESS-CPSU RELATIONS, AND ULTIMATELY MIGHT AFFECT
GOI-SOVIET RELATIONS, ALTHOUGH HE HOPED THIS LATTER WOULD
NOT HAPPEN. CHINESE DIPLOMATS ARE CHORTLING, AND A PRC
EMBASSY FIRST SECRETARY EXCLAIMED ENTHUSIASTICALLY TO AN
EMBOFF LAST WEEKEND AT HOW POORLY INDO-SOVIET RELATIONS
WERE DOING. THE "HINDU'S" WELL- INFORMED CORRESPONDENT,
G.K. REDDY, DECEMBER 3. WROTE OF A "FORTHCOMING" VISIT
BY PODGORNY BUT WAS UNABLE TO BE MORE ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT INDO-
SOVIET RELATIONS THAN TO SAY THEY "ARE AS GOOD AS CAN
BE IN THE PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES," AND THEN ELABORATED
ON THE PROBLEM POSED BY THE CPI IN DOMESTIC POLITICS.
HIS CONCULUSION WAS THAT IT WAS NECESSARY TO TRY TO
"DELINK" STATE LEVEL RELATIONS FROM DOMESTIC POLITICAL
CONSIDERATIONS.

3. THERE ARE TWO PROFESSIONAL SOVIET DELEGATIONS IN INDIA
AT THE PRESENT TIME, ADMIRAL GORSHKOV TO VISIT HIS
INDIAN NAVAL COLLEAGUES AND V.A. SERGEEV, DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF
THE STATE COMMITTEE ON
FOREIGN ECONOMIC RELATIONS (GKES) TO
VISIT THE SOVIET-BUILT STEELMILL AT BILLAI. MOREOVER,
INDO-SOVIET COMINGS AND GOINGS CONTINUE TO BE ACTIVE ON
A VARIETY OF TECHNICAL FRONTS. NEVERTHELESS, THE INDIAN
DOMESTIC POLITICAL SITUATION CLERALY DISTURBS THE SOVIETS,
PARTICULARLY THE ROLE OF SANJAY GANDHI. THE SOVIET
EMBASSY POLCOUNSELOR DESCRIBED SANJAY TO US AS SURROUNDED
BY "RIGHTIST" ELEMENTS, INCLUDING MILITARY INTELLIGENTSIA
(REPRESENTED BY HIS FATHER-IN-LAW, A RETIRED ARMY COLONEL),
THE CAPITALIST ELITE (REPRESENTED BY THE BIRLAS), AND
AMERICAN AGENTS (THIS SAID WITH A TIGHT SMILE TO AN EMBOFF,
BUT WITHOUT SPECIFICITY). WE AGREE THAT SANJAY IS ANTI-
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COMMUNIST, ALMOST CERTAINLY ANTI-SOVIET, AND HIS FUTURE
PROSPECTS ARE A MATTER OF APPARENTLY SERIOUS CONCERN TO
THE RUSSIANS. THE EAST GERMANS LAST WEEK MADE THE TACTICAL
ERROR OF ASSOCIATING THEMSELVES CLOSELY WITH A GROUP OF
SANJAY'S MOST STRENUOUS ENEMIES WITHIN THE CONGRESS AND
IN THE CPI IN CONNECTION WITH A GDR-INDIAN FRIENDSHIP
CELEBRATION IN ORISSA, AND SANJAY IMMEDIATELY PUT HIS
FRIENDS TO WORK SEEKING EVIDENCE FROM THE FRG EMBASSY IN

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DELHI OF DIRECT GDR-SOVIET CONNIVANCE IN THE ENTERPRISE.
ALTHOUGH MRS. GANDHI APPARENTLY GAVE THE GO-AHEAD FOR AN
APPROACH TO THE SOVIETS FOR A PODGORNY VISIT, WE ARE
NOT AT ALL SURPRISED TO SEE THE SOVIETS DRAG THEIR FEET
WHILE THEY WATCH SOME OF THE DOMESTIC POLITICAL TANGLES
IN INDIA UNWIND THEMSELVES FOR THE NEXT FEW MONTHS AT
LEAST.
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